

# The Washington Scene

## The 'Hush Hush' CIA

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Washington

A few days hence a "task force" of the Hoover Commission will begin a quiet investigation of one of the most "hush-hush" outfits in the United States Government. This is the Central Intelligence Agency, which is probably as little known to the American people as is the organization which makes our most fundamental foreign-policy decisions, the National Security Council.

Office space is already waiting in a downtown government building. Gen. Mark Clark, commanding the "task force" which will survey the Central Intelligence Agency, is rounding out his team. If his appointees are men of responsibility and broad vision, the survey will be useful, it will satisfy critics, and it may suggest improvements that will aid the nation's security.

The CIA's job is plainly and simply to deal in "intelligence" — military, political, strategic, diplomatic, and economic. The CIA is the coordinator and handles all of the "intelligence" coming into our government — "intelligence" data on, say, the Soviet Union's atomic progress, disaffection inside Communist China, military capabilities of the Vietminh, or the degree of nationalist sentiment inside West Germany.

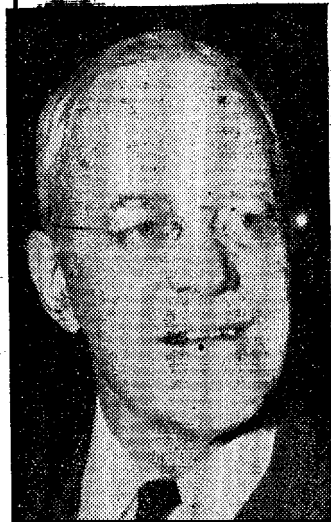
The CIA coordinates "intelligence" from State Department sources abroad, from the Army's G-2, from Naval Intelligence, from the Atomic Energy Commission and the FBI. It digests and evaluates this data and produces estimates and reports and alerts the President, for each member agency, and for the National Security Council.

The CIA has a budget which only a few members of a congressional appropriations subcommittee know much about. It may run to a billion dollars a year, but is probably not that high. Only a few members of Congress know the number of its employees.

This secrecy is essential. The CIA maintains liaison with similar intelligence agencies in nearly 40 free

nations. These foreign agencies would sever relations if there was any chance of a bumbling or careless probe that would expose secret agents, clandestine methods of operation, or vital documents and data. Likewise the CIA would sever relations with any foreign agency if that agency were likely to expose American operations.

Americans, naturally, don't particularly like this "hush-hush" business and secretiveness. Nor do they admire the fact that the CIA sometimes carries on some fairly vigorous counterintelligence — the sort of operation that earned the Office of Strategic Serv-



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Allen Dulles  
The CIA's Boss

ices the title of "cloak and dagger outfit" in World War II days. Not that the CIA uses daggers, but no one would be surprised if the CIA was instrumental in persuading several Soviet agents to quit the Soviet MVD and defect to the West. The persuasion could be monetary, or simply an assurance of help in starting life anew in the free world.

The CIA has no easy task. The Communist world seems to have a natural bent for secrecy and conspiracy. It has the advantage of years of experience in underground operations. It is desperately "in the know" about the Soviet

Union — about what the top hierarchy is planning, for instance, or precisely where Soviet atomic plants are located, or the exact status of the Soviet guided-missile program. Defectors from the Soviet Union are usually not of sufficiently high caliber to do more than expose intelligence operations in their own particular echelon or area: they are seldom in the direct confidence of Malenkov or Molotov.

There has been no sudden demand for an investigation into the CIA. Allen Dulles, director of the CIA, has the confidence of both the Republican and Democratic leadership in Washington. A few months ago Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (R) of Wisconsin suggested that the CIA was infiltrated with spies and Communists. To prevent any headline-hunting within the delicate apparatus of the CIA, Mr. Dulles said "no investigating by McCarthy" and President Eisenhower strongly supported him. The CIA is not going to be probed by Senator McCarthy.

General Clark, presumably, will proceed more circumspectly. It is healthy to subject any government agency, including the CIA, to an occasional independent review. Complaints about the CIA have suggested that it brought over some rather loose practices from its predecessor, the wartime OSS, and thus needs to be tightened up operationally. Also that on occasion it has placed too much reliance on foreign "intelligence" — specifically that it overrated optimistic French reports on Indochina. Also, that — since Soviet intelligence is scarce — it overevaluated the sparse data available.

But the CIA is a vast improvement over the days when State, Navy, and Army each hoarded its own intelligence reports, and duplicated operations in the field. The CIA is a functioning, successful outfit, operating in a field in which Americans have hitherto been largely inexperienced. If the CIA had been in existence in 1941, the Pearl Harbor disaster.

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